

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

February 17, 2004

4:30 PM

Chairman Thibault called the meeting to order

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Thibault, Roy, Gatsas (late), Osborne

Absent: Alderman Porter

Messrs: K. Hall, P. Mattson, R. MacKenzie, P. Flood, G. Leedy, B. Chabot

TABLED ITEM

On motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Roy it was voted to remove this item from the agenda.

Presentation regarding the Hackett Hill Master Plan.

Ms. Kym Hall stated I am here to talk a bit about my thesis that I did while a graduate student at Antioch New England Graduate School and I have a Powerpoint presentation. The title is "A Baseline Data Study of the Hydrologic Regime and Wetlands Plant Communities at Hackett Hill, Manchester, NH". The intent of the study was to provide baseline data documenting existing hydrologic conditions and plant community structure and composition within the wetlands under predevelopment conditions or prior to planned development activities on the property. Can I just ask how many of you have been out to the property? Okay good. So you are familiar with the wetland plant communities out there? Okay. I included four of these plant communities in my study and as you know some of the plant communities out there are pretty unique. Now the Natural Heritage Inventory ranks these plant communities and I have rankings that were as of 2001 and they are subject to change. I studied the Atlantic White Cedar Giant Rhododendron community, which is globally rare and State critically imperiled. This is the only one of its kind north of the state of Connecticut so it is extremely valuable to the City of Manchester, as well as the State of New Hampshire. Also included in my study was the Atlantic White Cedar community. This is the Atlantic White Cedar tree without the understory of Giant Rhododendron in the shrub and this is state imperiled. The Black Gum community, which is globally rare with a high vulnerability to extinction and the Red Maple community. I used

that as a comparison measure. That is widespread and abundant so there is nothing that special about it. It can live pretty much anywhere. Each of these species, with the exception of the Red Maple like I said is widespread and abundant, is extremely sensitive to changes in their hydrologic regime and hydrologic regime is changed by development. Now what hydrologic regime essentially is is the water table level so an Atlantic White Cedar may get used to having a water table that is about four inches above the ground surface and if that increases or decreases just a bit that can be enough that it can't tolerate it and the Atlantic White Cedar start to die off whereas the Red Maple tree and community can tolerate extreme ranges in their hydrologic regime so if it raises or lowers even a foot or more the Red Maples will likely stay there. The Atlantic White Cedar Giant Rhododendron community is located right in here and as you can see there is quite a bit of development going in around it, probably approximately 50% of the perimeter of that and surrounding the Atlantic White Cedar community between the development a very steep slope of shallow soil and because of that, that exacerbates the problem of rainfall dumping into the basin of the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. The water doesn't get a chance to percolate down through the soil before it empties into the basin and creates a new height of the water table so this could likely wipe out the Atlantic White Cedars. Now I just want to mention a few examples. In my research I read study after study that confirmed that development in the area surrounding Atlantic White Cedar Swamps has either led to a complete extirpation of the Atlantic White Cedar community or has significantly degraded the Atlantic White Cedar community. I just want to read a few examples for you. Spurdudo and Ritter, 1994...this is a New Hampshire study that observed that 16 of the 30 Cedar Swamp complexes included in their study were showing signs of significant loss resulting from flood damage or other impact. At the time of the study, three additional sites were undergoing extreme hydrologic stress but 2/3 of the Atlantic White Cedar communities in the State of New Hampshire are showing signs of impact due to development in the surrounding upland. Arenthold and Snyder, 1983 determined that as proximity to development increased in the New Jersey pine, Atlantic White Cedar ceiling density decreased so these ceilings were not surviving. Arenthold and Synder, 1987 determined that even minimal placement of roads in proximity to wetlands can impact the condition of those wetlands by altering the water levels and allowing invasive plant species to colonize the site. This here shows a fragmites colony, which is located adjacent to the Waterford development here in Manchester. Now this likely came in as a result of disturbances. It is an evasive plant species and more disturbances will likely cause more fragmites to come in wiping out the native plant species. Moscan, 1991 is a Massachusetts study that documented 11 Atlantic White Cedar wetlands that had been threatened or recently degraded as a result of nearby urban development. Lastly, Laderman, 1989 documented the death of an entire stand of mature Atlantic White Cedar only

six years after road and salt adjacent to the swamp in Falmouth, MA...the road caused the water tables to rise resulting in permanently saturated conditions.

Ms. Pat Mattson, West Webster Street stated I am going to talk mostly about the City side of the Hackett Hill property and I will back up a little bit to 1998 when there was the first public meeting held on this particular topic. Later on a draft version of the Master Plan appeared and then finally something that looked very similar to what we see before us. It is actually common knowledge in conservation circles that one proceeds with some sort of conservation plan prior to any development plan but that didn't appear to have been done in this particular case. Now clearly in the case of the Nature Conservancy's Preserve it was done and this was because people in the Nature Conservancy for many years had been very familiar with the habitat and the plants and animals that are found in this particular habitat so that would be this portion of the Hackett Hill property so in fact they had conservation in mind and when agreements were struck as to where the development line would be, they protected a certain species. When the formal plan finally appeared in 2000 there was a public meeting that was held and I provided everybody with a transcript of that particular meeting and people spoke. They were overwhelmingly against the planned development that you see here. Basically we find that a good reason for that is that there has been no conservation plan in mind for this particular area. However, after that response from the public the plan sort of disappeared for awhile. We didn't hear much about it for approximately three years and in the meantime certain activities have gone on with regard to what sort of plants and animals are found on the City side of the property. So, one of them certainly was Kim's study that we just heard about in considerable detail and there are others. She did a second study on vernal pools in the area and I will try to point out for you the location of these vernal pools. There is a large one that is located approximately here and then here near the so-called phantom parking lots there are several right at the bottom of that incline and another one over here. I have actually found others further down on this part of the property so there are a substantial number of vernal pools on this particular part of the property. So that is two studies that speak well for conservation of this area and a third one was done by a student at UNH-Manchester, Christine Morin. I didn't distribute the information that she provided but actually it was in the form of a Powerpoint presentation that was given to the Conservation Commission. I was one of maybe 12 people who heard that. Christine and her advisor, Stephen Pew at UNH-Manchester told the type of thing that she had done as a student there. Actually her work consisted of outlining the malian territories, large mammals and some mid-size mammals on the property – what was their territory and what was their habitat. I will trace from my memory or recollection the habitat of the fisher cat. We find that it would start down here, move up somewhat in this direction...the fisher cat would avoid the phantom parking lots but it went up further here and then down along the power line here. So, a fairly large portion

of the City side of the Hackett Hill property is a territory of the fisher cat and at the conclusion of her talk to the Conservation Commission, Christine made the point that if buildings and roads are put in at these places in all likelihood the fisher cat will be extirpated. That means it will become locally extinct. That seems a terrible shame particularly in light of the fact that we have recently adopted the fisher cat as the mascot for our baseball team. So to extricate it or move its habitat from the major place where it lives in Manchester seems contradictory. There is a final study that I would like to mention and that has to do with the handout that I gave you about the wetlands information. That was just recently received and presented to the Manchester Conservation Commission at their last meeting but it had to deal with prime wetlands designation for all of the wetlands in Manchester and especially they pointed out that the wetlands in the Nature Conservancy, the preserved portion of the property, needed that designation. It is a state designation that gives these wetlands a little extra protection especially needed in this case because some of the swamps are right at the periphery of the point where development is planned. So, it seems that while the business park plan has been on hold so to speak, in the meantime we have really put together a very nice nucleus of a conservation plan and it clearly mitigates against development – the three studies that I mentioned. Moreover I think that it shows the value of the property for educational purposes and there are many people who would like to use it for passive recreational purposes. If you recall the handout that I gave you from the people involved in the orienteering group that would be typical. That was recent but many people expressed opinions like that at the 2000 public meeting. To me education is priceless. I don't think you can put a dollar and cent value on it. It is something like help really and I think also that the image of the City is going to be greatly enhanced if we can keep the two portions of the property together and make it as one great eco-system, which it is because animals traverse back and forth between the two parts of the property. So, in conclusion I would like to say that the Sierra Club would like to repeat its recommendation for zero development of this property and we recommend that a conservation easement be placed on that portion of the land that is still owned by the City. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this information.

Chairman Thibault stated Pat I would just like to make one little comment as we go along. The City would certainly be remiss in not thanking you for the work that you have done in that area and in keeping the Committee informed on what was going on in that area. I would just like to let Bob MacKenzie give a presentation on this and let the Committee know so they can make an informed decision how we are going to proceed with this. Actually, we will take some questions from the Committee.

Ms. Mattson stated well actually we have another presenter, Peter Flood who is going to present the financials.

Chairman Thibault asked how long is that going to last because we have a timeframe here. We have other meetings after this one. Is five minutes enough? Can you give the Committee a synopsis of what you have in five minutes?

Mr. Peter Flood, Merrimack NH responded I will try. If you would allow me to lead you through this handout, part of it is already familiar to you in the form of the Hackett Hill Master Plan, which is in print. My critique of it is in hand done pen to distinguish it and also to put my fingerprints on it so I am the only one to blame. I have been a real estate developer, a home builder and renovator and real estate agent for the past 35 years. My concerns are with the economics and with the taxation and the development impacts upon the City of Manchester. If we could start with number one, the Master Plan itself and what I think is a major discrepancy in the figures of the Master Plan as it has been presented, I am looking at the Master Plan now of November 18, 2003. I understand there is a December 18, 2003 version that I have not seen. In this one, over on the left at the top the first several items are costs and then as we progress to the right, Year 1, 2 3 up through Year 12 is depicted. The last cost is called the Municipal Operating Cost and if you see down in the notes, the third one down from the bottom says that the Municipal Operating Cost is based on \$296 per 1,000 square feet constructed. I maintain that that is the wrong criteria. I don't argue with the \$296 but that is supposed to be the cost per \$1,000 of taxes brought in by an office building as the municipal cost involved with first-class office buildings and it would seem, therefore, that the City would get a \$704 profit so to speak from every \$1,000 taken in in taxes but if you apply the correct criteria of the \$296 per \$1,000 in taxes brought in, if you look back up to Municipal Operating Costs and the arrow I put to Real Municipal Operating Costs, it comes out quite differently. As a matter of fact it comes out to \$4,685,000 over the 12 years rather than \$2,400,000. So there is a discrepancy of over \$2 million in this particular depiction of the proformer, which I would remind everybody is not fact but fiction. Also, my critique, therefore, is going to be new fiction. So it is just whose fiction is the best fiction. In this particular case there is already a mistake here of \$2.5 million. The next thing to consider when this shows a net cost benefit cumulative of \$8,907,877 it is already only \$6,600,000 rather than the \$8.9 million. There are no other considerations of impact on this proformer, which I think should be definitely added before any intelligent decisions would be made upon a major development such as this. In my notes, the second note with the two stars at the bottom says keep in mind that all taxes generated are spent on this development and are not available to pay for any other tax impacts that will occur over these years. That \$296 per \$1,000 in taxes is only for the municipal cost of the building as it is built to take care of fire, water, sewer, police protection and so forth. If you go to Page

2 I will show you some of the other considerations involved because they have to be taken into account before a blessing of a plan of such magnitude, which seems to be a guaranteed success as it is presented. The statistics and cost that I have are taken from Ebon Fodor's book Better Not Bigger and one of our own New Hampshire planners from the Seacoast has worked with Fodor out on the west coast over the past several years and in asking him about Fodor's statistics he claims that they are right on. Some charts from his book are attached to help explain the following impacts that I will synopsise. In addition to the proformer assumptions of building 1,400,000 square feet, which would take four employees per 1,000 square feet or produce 5,600 employees, we are assuming and this is just out of common sense so to speak that about 75% of those 5,600 new workers will be parents, that 50% of them will create new households in Manchester – that would give 2,100 new households, that 2/3 of a school kid per household would yield 1,407 kids in school each with a capital cost of \$11,377. That would put the school capital cost of this full development when completed at \$23,891,700. The cost of bonding that would be almost \$1,200,000 a year. The cost of other development impacts at \$14,000 per dwelling and \$11,600 per 1,000 square feet of office space would be \$45,640,000. The cost of bonding that would be another \$2,300,000 per year. The cost of serving residential use at \$140 per \$1,000 of taxes because it costs more than the \$1,000 taken into to service a house at 2,100 homes would be another \$1,512,000. The cost of 1,407 students at about \$7,000 per year per student and this is apart from capital costs, these are operating costs per student, would be almost \$10 million a year. The possible impact cost from Hackett Hill development, therefore, would possibly approximate \$15 million per year. I would suggest that Manchester seriously consider hiring a consultant such as Ebon Fodor who wrote the book that I mentioned, to do an impact analysis on the Hackett Hill plan. If you go back to the first page and look at the possible impact costs per year for the little black dots down on the left, I have taken those costs and the impact costs cumulative below that...those two black dots and the arrows, if you take those across the 12 years the true net cost benefit cumulative for the Hackett Hill development comes out at not a positive \$6,600,000 but it comes out at a debit, a net cost of over \$87 million cumulative for the 12 years and then after that until all the bonds are paid of it is going to be over \$15 million a year with my assumptions taken as fact. If you take half of my assumptions then the cumulative net cost in 12 years would be about \$45 million if that seems more acceptable and about \$8 million a year until the bonds are paid.

Chairman Thibault stated I appreciate your enlightenment to the Committee but I believe we should have some questions now.

Alderman Gatsas stated Mr. Flood certainly having participated both in reading your fictional novels and working on some of those fictional novels I certainly give you credit for the fiction that you may have brought before us. Certainly

being a developer, if you were the owner of this property you can't tell me that bringing forward a development that you would consider losing \$87 million if you were the owner and you were going to develop this property.

Mr. Flood responded I am trying to address the cost to the taxpayers or the overall impact to the community.

Alderman Gatsas stated you are showing an impact of some 1,407 children as an impact to the community. That over a 12-year period is less than 1% per year in growth. Whether we do this project or we don't do this project the sad news is if we don't do the project these incurred expenses are going to occur, at least the \$23 million ones because of the growth factor of students in this community. There are obviously issues that we can talk about and bring forward but I think if we are looking for a creation of tax base that maybe the development that you see before us, the proformer, may not be the best way to develop the property. I don't disagree with that but certainly developing it would not create an impact of \$87 million to the community because some of those are already inherent and just growth throughout the community in itself.

Mr. Flood responded I admit that it is very difficult to filter out what is net this or that from any development but Mr. Fodor in his book has pointed out that what we developers used to think was about \$1,000 to \$1,500 per home built impact to a town turns out to be more like \$28,000 per house built in a town and he has been able to point these out. He has filtered out over several studies how these impacts can be counted and they amount to much, much more than had been thought before 1996.

Chairman Thibault stated I think we are talking about apples and oranges here. We don't even know what the City's commitment or problems are with this. Why don't we let Mr. MacKenzie bring up his side of this problem and then if we can as a Committee try to analyze exactly where the City wants to go. I think right now we are talking about one side. I would like to hear both sides. Bob could I ask you to give the Committee some insight as to exactly where this thing is at.

Mr. Robert MacKenzie replied sure. I would like to invite up Gordon Leedy, the City's consultant and Ken Edwards. Ken is with the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority. I did want to go back a little ways just to remind the Board what the Board of Mayor and Aldermen acted upon roughly five years ago. Their goal was to purchase the UNH site for several purposes. The first purpose was to bring UNH-Manchester down to one site in the Millyard. They felt it was important to bring that economic development activity downtown and bring the jobs and education. Secondly, there is no land left in Manchester that we have to build tax base. The Aldermen felt that it was important because they had been

wrestling with the tax base issue that they bring new tax base into the City. This is the largest opportunity left to bring tax base to the City. Thirdly and perhaps as important was the idea of bringing jobs into the City, particularly those jobs that would otherwise go to suburban communities. We have done a lot in Manchester to bring jobs and economic development back downtown but still the market for that is somewhat limited. Most activities are going to go into suburban and rural areas. The City felt that if we didn't have a location, such as Hackett Hill, that they would be going into the suburbs. They would be going into Bedford and Merrimack and Londonderry and this was the last opportunity for the City to provide that opportunity. The Manchester Airpark, which the MHRA worked on, is basically developed out and I would add that the projections for that industrial park and other industrial park projects have met their goals in terms of jobs, taxpayers and have in many cases exceeded those. I believe we handed out to the Committee at the last meeting a summary of the Manchester Airpark and it is clear that even at that time there was skepticism about whether those goals had ever been met. Those goals were met and I think the Board has to consider in their deliberations what we are trying to do with this property. We are trying to balance a number of things. I did want to touch on the presentation today. There was a comment made that there was no conservation plan in advance of development. That is not correct. We actually developed a conservation plan that was the largest conservation effort ever in the City of Manchester. We got that plan approved by the NH Department of Environmental Services. We got it approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As a cooperating partner we had the Nature Conservancy working with us and strongly supporting us. Some of the parts of that plan were not required of us but I would say that we have met all of those and have exceeded all of those conservation efforts. I do want to show you a plan of the conservation area. I am going to kind of hang it out over the edge here. Gordon is going to show it but this is the land that we have in advance of any development. We have gotten the Federal government to approve, the State of NH to approve it and we have gotten other partners involved in the project. This exceeds what was anticipated to be the original preserve. It now totals 602 acres. I would also note that all of the unique areas, all of the Atlantic White Cedar and all of the Black Gum and all of the Giant Rhododendron wetlands are within the preserves. Not only are the preserves protected, I did hear some comments that if you put roadways adjacent to the wetlands it can harm them, but a large majority, perhaps 98% of the entire watershed surrounding these wetlands have been preserved. There are only a couple of areas on the plan where there could be development within the watershed. So we are touching none of the unique natural areas and we are preserving virtually all of the watersheds that flow into these. Virtually all of the development would be on watersheds that flow away from this preserve. We are not changing the hydrologic balance. We are using the natural slope of the area down near the interstate to put the development adjacent to the interstate area. So there would be no change to the hydrologic characteristics. We

have gone above and beyond in trying to protect these areas. We have negotiated with developers who own land adjacent to the UNH parcel to try to acquire that. I believe the City has made an incredible effort to make sure that the conservation plan originally laid out was carried out and I believe it has been. If you talk to the Environmental Protection Agency, if you talk to the DES, if you talk to the Nature Conservancy, I think they are all proud of what has been done here. In fact the regional office of the EPA has proposed this for a national awards nomination for environmental protection. We have certainly done a lot to protect this unique area while balancing the need that the City has for job creation and tax base creation. A couple of other points. Those are the fundamental goals that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen had five years ago when they went into this. They can change those but I still see that we need land for tax base creation. We need land for jobs. We are losing many traditional type jobs like Jac Pac lost 500 jobs. We need those in order to be a balanced City because we are losing a number of jobs. I would like to comment briefly on Mr. Flood's interpretation of the plan. First of all, I do think that our municipal operating cost projections are correct. We have had both the consultant and others look at these numbers and believe that they are correct. The primary thesis that Mr. Flood is presenting is that we are not factoring in the school children changes because of this. First of all, I do not believe that this inherently would create new people coming into the City. We are currently having people come into the City without this project, not because of job creation but because of a lot of other factors. If these job and these manufacturing facilities and this research and development park went elsewhere they would go into the region. They would go into Merrimack. They would go into Londonderry. They would go into Amherst. What we are finding now is that a lot of people that work in those areas actually come to live in Manchester so we could have the ironic position that those jobs went elsewhere and we would get the housing, we would get the people and the school children without having the tax money benefit to pay for those. So I significantly question his philosophy that we are going to generate all of these new school children. I would note that we have a system in place that if a new housing unit is built that we get school impact fee money to help build capacity and we have other systems in place including the design-build program to increase the capacity of our schools. School enrollments are not necessarily directly related to economic development. They are related more to the natural demographic trends. Right now what we are seeing in our schools is a peak of children because of the baby boom echo. Those are the kids of the baby boomer generation that are now coming through our school system. We are actually seeing significant declines in our elementary schools and a leveling off of our middle school population. The NASDAQ projections that the School Department has show that the school enrollment population will be declining in total within the next two years. Those are because of the larger demographic trends rather than redevelopment or development activity. So when you look at the analysis that he has put together I do not believe based on other economic

development projects that we have had in the City that this will actually come out. We have factored in all of the issues that we believe come down to the cost benefit analysis for the City to consider. Again, I would also note that we are seeing an increasing imbalance of commercial industrial development to residential development. Thirty years ago we had a roughly equal balance of residential tax base at 50% and commercial and industrial at 50%. Now that has changed significantly. We are at the point where over 60% of our tax base is residential. A lot of the people living here are actually commuting out to go to jobs elsewhere. Less than 40% of our tax base is commercial and industrial. We are becoming more of a bedroom community so I do not see how in this case if we had more economic development through job creation and a research and development park we are not going to see any more significant increase in school children and housing in the City due to that. So those were the quick points that I had for the Committee. I would be happy to answer any questions. Ken Edwards is here and he could certainly talk about the results of the Manchester Airpark, which is an industrial park and Gordon Leedy is here. He originally did the proformer and could answer any questions.

Chairman Thibault stated before we go into that if I could I have just one question for you. Bob, in the piece of land that we acquired at Hackett Hill if you will how little of that has the City deemed probable to be developed? I would like the Committee to be aware of that. Is it 10% or 12%?

Mr. MacKenzie responded we looked at the property and determined that roughly 150-acres of that original 800-acre site was reasonably suitable for development.

Alderman Gatsas asked Mr. MacKenzie can you tell me, do you think that right now in the City of Manchester you could find 2,100 building lots to accommodate new construction for 2,100 homes.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no. Right now there is only a relatively small amount of room left for single family. We will see quite a bit of multi-family housing developments but not on that magnitude. There is just not enough raw land left to redevelop for housing purposes.

Alderman Roy stated from what we have heard tonight there is obviously a discrepancy between the City side and the Sierra side. My first question would be to Mr. Flood because of the work he has done and by the way thank you very much Pat and Peter for being here. In looking at what we have for information...I was not on the Aldermanic Board when the first preserve was put in for conservation but in looking at this are we talking about just water off of buildings? What other impacts...there is a discrepancy on the soils and the conditions and what will happen but what is the major impact if you had to narrow it down to 20

words? What could we, looking at the development side and being responsive to taxpayers, what could we say if we went forward with this or said no to this because of these issues?

Ms. Hill asked major impacts to the ecology.

Alderman Roy answered yes.

Ms. Hill answered if I had to narrow it down I would say invasive species since we have already seen signs of that.

Alderman Roy stated we have spoken at length about the fine line that we are going to walk with this between being responsible to the taxpayer and being responsible to the environment. If we could bring the water off of the property and keep the swampland the way it is, how would you feel about that?

Ms. Mattson asked could you rephrase that.

Alderman Roy answered one of the big concerns is the parking lot drainage. How would you address that if we were to go forward?

Ms. Mattson stated the Sierra Club is in favor of the policy of zero development so I don't think I can really respond to any modification of a scheme where buildings are going to be involved. At this time when the statement was made by Mr. MacKenzie that...I said that a conservation plan had not been adopted or had not been put into practice and clearly I am very much aware of the Nature Conservancy's nature preserve and I was not referring to that part of the property. I was talking about the City side of the property when I said there was no conservation plan or no studies had been done. Indeed if it had not been for the two studies done by Ken from the Sierra Club and the study by Christine Morin I think you would be hard pressed to show me any type of scientific analysis that has been done on the actual City-owned property. That is what I was talking about, not the Nature Conservancy's preserve. I clearly recognize that was a major accomplishment.

Mr. MacKenzie stated because I have been involved in this area in land preservation in that area for almost a decade. We identified this area as a unique area in the City's Master Plan in 1993. To say that these are two separate projects and somehow the Nature Conservancy did the preserve that is not correct. The environmental plan was we are going to take this 1,000-acre area, we are going to take the largest majority of that and put it into preserve and then we are going to take the most suitable for development along the highway and develop that for tax

purposes. That was the conservation plan. To say that these are two separate things is totally incorrect.

Alderman Gatsas asked, Mr. MacKenzie, was there any...when UNH had first gone in and was planning on developing the campus was there any conservation in mind at that time.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no there was not.

Alderman Gatsas asked, Ms. Mattson, did the Sierra Club ever weigh in when UNH first went in about the conservation area.

Ms. Mattson answered thank you for bringing that up. We feel as though we were neglected and I don't know if that is the correct choice of words but we were not included in any of the discussions that went on prior to the arrangement of the compliance agreement between the City and the EPA and DES. The Audubon Society was involved and of course the Nature Conservancy but we had no involvement whatsoever. We did not sit at the table when those preliminary discussions took place. Why, I couldn't tell you because later on when we became aware of what was going on we got very actively involved but it has always been at the periphery and more or less as an outsider.

Alderman Gatsas replied I guess my question was really prior to that. When UNH first acquired the property and was going to put their campus there way back when did the Sierra Club ever step in and look for a conservation area at that time.

Ms. Mattson stated I wasn't even living in Manchester at that time. That is a good question. I talked with a person who was a trustee of the University of New Hampshire at that time and I said didn't you realize what you were doing and he said no we just went ahead. I don't think that any surveys or scientific studies were done. They should have been done. I don't think we even know what was there before those roads and parking lots were built.

Alderman Gatsas asked so wouldn't you commend the City and Mr. MacKenzie for their efforts in 1993 to preserve over 80% of the land that they had acquired from UNH when UNH really had no idea of any conservation in that total package.

Ms. Mattson answered I think UNH had some idea of conservation of the area because there are people who were actually conducting research studies on the property at the time but I don't think they had the wherewithal to arrange a formal conservation plan. I don't know why that was never done. I regret very much that they sold the property and abandoned the building. I feel that had they remained

in French Hall or at least kept part of the university there that there could have been a greater opportunity for environmental education on the land that is now formerly the preserve. There is probably no need to have a formal protection. I think things were working out very well until suddenly there arose this interest in developing on a section of the property that was so close to the preserve area.

Alderman Gatsas asked wouldn't you agree that there are some people out there – cat lovers, dog lovers who wouldn't have a problem seeing fisher cats totally extinct from that area.

Ms. Mattson answered I don't know. I think they have their place in the immense web of life on that property. As I said I think a complete extermination or local extinction of an animal is not the direction to go.

Alderman Osborne asked how much of this 150-acres is divided into well let's say light manufacturing or office space and living space. What are the percentages?

Mr. MacKenzie answered there are no areas allocated for residential. To some extent we are going to allow the market to determine how much is research and development, how much is corporate office space and how much is manufacturing. Those percentages haven't been pinned down until we saw what the actual market was in this area.

Alderman Osborne asked so this could be limited to light manufacturing and office space without residential.

Chairman Thibault answered it is.

Mr. MacKenzie stated there is no residentially zoned land. The Master Plan has no room for residential in this area.

Chairman Thibault stated Ms. Mattson you know I have been up there and as a matter of fact you were there the day I was up there and when I look at all of the parking lots and the possible areas where they were going to put buildings in this area prior to even you knowing I guess or the Sierra Club or whoever, I think the City has done an awful lot to try to bring this thing back as a preserve – as much of this area as could be preserved. I hope that you don't feel that the City could spend that kind of money and get absolutely nothing from it. I think the City through Bob MacKenzie and the Planning Department and through the state and other agencies have tried to bring as small an area as possible so that we can recover some of our investment for the land that we bought up there. I realize that the idea of trying to save certain animals or certain areas of that place is to you or

to many people and to me even a right to try to do. The City still has to recover some of that cost.

Ms. Mattson stated one point that was not mentioned that perhaps should have been brought up was that in this establishing of the Nature Conservancy's preserve the City has spent really millions of dollars to provide buffer land around the core Atlantic White Cedar swamps and Black Gums and now the City wants to develop in a highly critical and very sensitive place where there will be no buffer zone and you are putting the swamp land at risk so that you have created a preserve but the preserve has no protection at a very sensitive point and will go downhill and become degraded and there will be nothing there to be proud of. As to the cost, I think that Peter has presented information that there will be no tax benefit coming to the City. It looks as though all the money is going out so there will be a deficit again so that seems like a second reason for not developing in that area.

Alderman Lopez stated I think you brought up a very good point about the investment of \$7 million. It is interesting to hear both sides and the documentation that we received on this I have probably read twice and I could probably read it five more times and pick up different things on it. Mr. MacKenzie, the report you say that the School Department has is that a recent report because I know they are doing a study on the enrollment?

Mr. MacKenzie responded that was done roughly three years ago. They will be updating it but so far the actual numbers have held close to those projections. Our enrollment in the elementary schools has been declining.

Alderman Lopez stated they will be getting that report as I understand it in about a week. I would like to clear up in my own mind because this is where I am at as far as voting as an individual when it comes out of Committee, the \$296 versus \$1,000 in taxes versus your 1,000 square feet is that a correct number or is that a mistake or what? I don't think these are your numbers are they?

Mr. MacKenzie stated they came from VHB. We have reviewed them and I believe they are accurate. I would offer Gordon Leedy to comment on those as well.

Mr. Gordon Leedy stated just to quickly go through methodology, there is...

Alderman Lopez interjected let me save some time. Is it square feet or is it taxes? Is he right or are you?

Mr. Leedy answered we believe it is square feet.

Alderman Lopez stated one other thing. I mentioned at the full Board meeting about the fire station. Why wasn't the fire station included in the impact of this whole development because we all know that we are going to have to put a \$1.9 million fire station up there eventually? Can anybody answer that?

Mr. MacKenzie responded the fire station has been planned for a number of years and in fact we are collecting a development impact fee to help pay for that. It won't cover all of the costs but in 1995 we did start a development impact fee for the Hackett Hill fire station.

Mr. Flood asked can I have an opportunity to ask a couple of questions.

Chairman Thibault answered quickly.

Mr. Flood asked, Mr. MacKenzie, how much of an impact fee is charged to a developer who wants to build a three-bedroom house in Manchester.

Mr. MacKenzie answered \$1,630.

Mr. Flood stated Senator Gatsas the 2,100 new households would not necessarily be 2,100 new homes to fill and it is not necessary to build the new three-bedroom houses to get the family with the 2/3 of a kid to move into a three-bedroom house and be willing to pay the empty nester enough to persuade him to go south or go to a condo. So it is not necessary for the perception of the study or the critique or whatever to build 2,100 new homes in order to get 2,100 new households with 2/3 of a school kid per three-bedroom home. I would also like to ask Mr. MacKenzie and perhaps the other people if they have read Mr. Fodor's book and if they think it has any merit.

Chairman Thibault responded maybe I am lost here in the wilderness but as I understand it from Mr. MacKenzie and all of the others you cannot build a home there. This is strictly...

Mr. Flood interjected no this isn't building a home there, Mr. Chairman. The 5,600 new employees who are going to come in because of the 1,400,000 square feet of office space built. If 75% of them are going to make households in Manchester and produce 2/3 of a school kid per three-bedroom domicile then the impact is going to be much greater than \$1,632 per home and I simply am urging that the new thought on impact be considered by the City and perhaps you can bring a guy like Mr. Fodor into the City who has done the studies to do an impact analysis that is not coming from me or the Sierra Club or from your own people. You would get an objective outsider view and it might be well worth the investment to the City of Manchester.

Chairman Thibault responded that is a good point and I am sure that they review this constantly as they go along. At least they keep telling us they do. I am betting that they do.

Alderman Gatsas stated Mr. Flood I agree with you but there is one problem. Some of those 2,100 people are going to be coming from a two-bedroom apartment that are already located in this City so the impact would have already occurred by the child's birth, not because he is buying a home from an empty nester so if you are assuming that 2,100 people are coming to this City from outside of Manchester then your calculation would be correct. However, if 50% of those people are coming from the apartments within the City your calculation is fictional.

Alderman Roy asked, Mr. MacKenzie have you had a chance to review Mr. Flood's rebuttal to the proformer.

Mr. MacKenzie answered just here moments ago. Again I would comment that his two main thesis are...

Alderman Roy interjected just for the sake of time can you get us a letter in writing with a rebuttal from the Planning Department. I know you are going to stand by the proformer but I would like you to just take a look at his statistics and give us some of your insight and bring it down to a Manchester concept.

Mr. MacKenzie answered sure I would be happy to.

Chairman Thibault stated I am looking for a recommendation to approve the Master Plan as submitted.

Alderman Gatsas moved to table the Hackett Hill Master Plan. Alderman Roy duly seconded the motion. Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

4. Request from Kenneth DeSchuiteneer on behalf of Mr. Rene Soucy to acquire property on Frances Street known as Map 0861, Lots 0023 and 0024.

Alderman Gatsas moved to table this item. Alderman Osborne duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Forest stated Mr. Chabot is here from Joseph Street and I was just going to ask the Committee if they could listen to what he has to say and then table this so he wouldn't have to come back at the next meeting.

Mr. Bob Chabot, 73 Joseph Street, Manchester stated I am interested in these non-buildable lots. I have been involved in that for quite a few years now and there are a lot of strange things happening try to build on unbuildable lots. I don't care how many you have, they are still unbuildable lots. My interest is because I live on an undersized lot. When I bought it 50+ years ago the land was undersized and I didn't realize it. At that time I was ignorant of what the rules were, which might or might not have been enforced at the time but now we are on septic systems. I have a neighbor that has the same problem. If anyone should build behind him or me they are encroaching upon our inability to increase our septic systems. The slope of the land is very important. The water can migrate onto us because the land behind us is higher than ours. If they are interested in that piece of land that belongs to the City, looking at a plan everything is level but in reality it isn't. It isn't shown on this map. If they do that then the City is going to be buying a burden that they don't realize. Because of the slope there is no way at the end of that so-called street, which has never been accepted by the City there is going to be a need to have engineering done. There is no way you can make a turn around at the other end because that is in a slope that is so grave and there is no room to build a turn around. Everything is septic. I don't think we will ever live long enough to see a pumping station installed there because of the prohibitive costs. I think the City should be looking at some of the information that has been gathered about those properties. They have built a...they started to build a house behind us on land that hadn't been sold to the ones who built it or wanted to build it. There are a lot of things that have been going on out there and I think the City should look very, very carefully at what you are going to sell because you are going to be held liable for it for a long time and whatever little money you can gather from buying or selling that land rather, that one parcel, is not going to cover the responsibility that you are taking on to make that accessible. If there is a fire or grave illness it is going to be difficult to get fire engines or ambulances or police in there. There are a lot of downsides to this. Looking at a piece of paper doesn't give you all of the information you need. I have been trying to buy that piece of land from the son of the original owner who has power of attorney. It is his call and he can do what he wants with it and certainly he wants to make as much money as he can but the value of that land is what the City has put on it. He never volunteered to pay any more money than he absolutely had to, which is normal. I would want the same benefits. I would like to buy that property to have the privacy and to have the ability to have greenery around the house and to have the

quietness that it brings about. I am sorry that they took the liberty of cutting down some of the larger trees that were there but I don't think that the owner gave them permission and they never asked permission from the City to do what they did. I imagine a lot of this. I probably can't prove it but if the City is still interested in selling that they better be aware that they are buying a pig in a poke.

Chairman Thibault responded I went out there myself with one of the Assessors to look at this land and certainly I am still in a quandary as to how it could go but let me tell you that before the City sells this land the City will know that it is on sure footing. We will not sell that land unless we know that proper things can be done to alleviate all of the problems that are in that area. That is the best I can tell you at this time and I have taken it upon myself to go over there with one of the Assessors to look at that land and I believe I also brought the Building Department out there to look at it to make sure and they are all in the steps of looking at what can be done and what should be done. Right now as far as I am concerned it is on hold.

Mr. Chabot stated I hope the City will survey the width of that street. I am very much afraid that part of it is going down that sandbank.

Chairman Thibault responded I am sure the Highway Department has that in hand. Thank you for your comments.

Alderman Forest stated I want to reserve the right at the next meeting to talk about this item.

Chairman Thibault called for a vote on the motion to table. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

TABLED ITEMS

5. Report, if available, from Planning, Assessors, Tax and Solicitor regarding transferring the former Highland Goffs Falls School to Moore Center Services, Inc.

This item remained on the table.

6. Disposition of property on South Mammoth Road, Map 796, Lot 14.

This item remained on the table.

7. Request from Albertine and Dennis Morrisette to acquire a parcel of land on Trolley Court, known as Map 897, Lot 145.

This item remained on the table.

8. Request from Rallitsa M. Kostakis to acquire property on Belmont Street previously owned by Boston & Maine Railroad Company and now owned by the State of New Hampshire (Map 129).

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Roy it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee